

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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INFORM CONSULS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP

SUBJECT: WRAP-UP REPORT ON 1978 BIENNIAL AF COMMERCIAL
OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

1. THE BIENNIAL AF COMMERCIAL OFFICERS' CONFERENCE WAS
HELD FEBRUARY 20-24, 1978 AT NAIROBI. THE CONFERENCE
PERMITTED AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF
U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON (COMMERCE, STATE,
EXIMBANK, AND OPIC) AND THE OFFICERS DOING COMMERCIAL WORK
AT AF POSTS. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE WAS TO
REVIEW AND CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH THE EXPORT PROMOTION
ACTIVITIES OF THE USG IN AFRICA COULD BE IMPROVED.

2. THIS TELEGRAM DOES NOT PROVIDE A VERBATIM REPORT ON
THE CONFERENCE. RATHER, IT FOCUSES ON THE CONCLUSIONS OF
THE CONFERENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS THAT REQUIRE FOLLOW-UP
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BY WASHINGTON OR BY THE POSTS.

RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING FOLLOW-UP

3. RECOMMENDATIONS CALLING FOR WASHINGTON ACTION

A. MORE GUIDANCE SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO AF POSTS ON

CLARIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF U.S. INVESTMENT POLICY IN LDC'S. WHAT RESTRAINTS DOES A "NEUTRAL" USG POLICY ON INVESTMENT DECISIONS PLACE ON POSTS' ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE U.S. INVESTMENTS IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF AFRICA.

B. AF POSTS NEED MORE GUIDANCE ON THE APPLICATION OF U.S. BOYCOTT LEGISLATION TO FIRMS IN COUNTRIES WHICH BOYCOTT TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

C. AF POSTS NEED A ONE PAGE LIST OF KEY CONTACTS IN USDOC FOR THE VARIOUS COMMERCE PROGRAMS.

D. AS IN THE CASE OF FSL'S, FSO'S SHOULD ONLY BE ASSIGNED TO COMMERCE DISTRICT OFFICES FOR CONSULTATION WHERE FIRMS ARE LOCATED WITH INTERESTS IN THE COUNTRY WHERE HE IS ASSIGNED.

E. COMMERCE SHOULD RESUME NOTIFYING POSTS OF FIRMS WHICH SEND CIRCULAR LETTERS TO FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS SO THAT LETTERS FROM THESE FIRMS CAN BE REFERRED TO COMMERCE. POSTS SHOULD REFER OBVIOUSLY CIRCULAR TYPE LETTERS TO COMMERCE SO THAT IT CAN MAINTAIN AN UP-TO-DATE LIST OF THESE FIRMS.

F. COMMERCE SHOULD OCCASIONALLY SEND OUT LISTS OF UNCLASSIFIED

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FIRMS IN THE U.S. WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO FREQUENT TRADE COMPLAINTS.

G. AIRGRAMS FROM COMMERCE PROVIDING BASIC GUIDANCE WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN INCORPORATED INTO THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS MANUAL SHOULD BE REPEATED TO THE POSTS EVERY TWO YEARS SINCE FILES IN AF POSTS ARE RETIRED PERIODICALLY.

H. POSTS NEED MORE EVALUATION FROM COMMERCE ON THE ECONOMIC TRENDS REPORTS.

I. RESEARCH SHOULD BE CONDUCTED ON WHERE THE FRENCH ARE WEAKEST IN THE FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES AND SALES PROMOTION EFFORTS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED IN THOSE SECTORS.

J. ONE COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER FOR FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

K. CATALOG SHOWS SHOULD BE SCHEDULED FOR ONE FRANCOPHONE OR ANGLOPHONE COUNTRY TO SERVE SEVERAL FRANCOPHONE OR ANGLOPHONE COUNTRIES IN THE AREA.

L. CATALOG SHOWS SHOULD BE MORE SPECIALIZED.

M. PLANNED COMMERCE SPONSORED TRADE PROMOTION EVENTS SHOULD BE MORE REGIONAL TO EXPOSE MAJOR U.S. FIRMS TO THE INDIVIDUAL MARKETS OF THE AREA. NEIGHBORING POSTS SHOULD BE INFORMED OF TRADE PROMOTION EVENTS SPONSORED BY COMMERCE AND THEY SHOULD BE KEPT INFORMED OF CHANGES IN SCHEDULING OF THE EVENTS.

N. AF POSTS NEED MORE GUIDANCE ON THE DEGREE OF ASSISTANCE TO BE PROVIDED TO REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S. FIRMS EXPORTING FROM OVERSEAS SUBSIDIARIES. PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS SHOULD BE REISSUED TO THE FIELD.

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O. IOGA TRADE MISSIONS SHOULD CONFORM MORE TO A SPECIFIC PRODUCT OR SECTOR THEME.

P. OVERSEAS BUSINESS REPORTS SHOULD ALWAYS BE CLEARED BY POSTS TO AVOID ERROR AND SHOULD BE REVISED AT YEARLY INTERVALS.

Q. THERE IS A LACK OF FEEDBACK FROM USDOC ON IMPROPERLY PREPARED WTDR'S. GUIDANCE IS NEEDED FROM USDOC ON WTDR REPORTING ON PARASTATALS. GUIDANCE IS ALSO NEEDED FROM USDOC ON HOW L.O.U. FOLLOW-UPS TO WTDR'S ARE USED TO INFORM BUSINESSMEN.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS CALLING FOR POST ACTION

A. VISITOR EXCHANGE PROGRAMS SHOULD BE USED TO A GREATER EXTENT TO INTRODUCE POTENTIAL BUYERS TO SELLERS IN THE U.S.

B. USDOC SHOULD BE INFORMED OF VISITORS TO WASHINGTON WHO MIGHT HAVE COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE.

C. COMMERCIAL LIBRARIES SHOULD BE EQUIPPED WITH TECHNICAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE DICTIONARIES TO PERMIT TRANSLATION OF SIC CATEGORIES AND CATALOGS. THESE MAY BE ORDERED THROUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT LIBRARY.

D. POSTS CAN AFFECT THE VENUE AND CONTENT OF TRADE PROMOTION EVENTS, BUT THEY MUST TAKE EARLY INITIATIVES IN INFORMING COMMERCE.

E. POSTS DESIRING RESPONSE ON TRADE OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD SEND A COPY TO THE COUNTRY MARKETING MANAGER FOR
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AFRICA, USDOC.

F. JOB DESCRIPTIONS SHOULD BE WRITTEN FOR FSL'S TO ENSURE THAT THEY RECEIVE WAGES COMPARABLE TO THOSE PAID FOR SIMILAR WORK IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR OF THE COUNTRY.
G. TRAINING OF FSL'S AT OTHER POSTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. SOME OF THIS IS DONE, FOR EXAMPLE, BY JOHANNESBURG FOR THE BLS COUNTRIES.

5. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. WHILE COMMERCIAL OFFICERS CAN PROVIDE FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE TO HOST GOVERNMENTS WHICH DESIRE TO PROMOTE EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES, THE HOST GOVERNMENTS SHOULD LOOK PRIMARILY TO DEVELOPMENTAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE WORLD BANK, THE UNDP, OR USAID TO HELP THEM IN THEIR LONG RANGE MARKETING PLANS. THE PROBLEM IS MORE ONE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EXPORT DIVERSIFICATION THAN INCREASED EXPORTS TO THE U.S. SINCE THE U.S. HAS A DEFICIT WITH MOST OF THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND A TRADE DEFICIT OF OVER \$6 BILLION WITH THE AREA AS A WHOLE.

B. SOME POSTS DO NOT THINK TECHNICAL SALES SEMINARS ARE PARTICULARLY USEFUL BECAUSE OF INAPPROPRIATE TECHNICAL PAPERS, AND INSUFFICIENTLY INTERESTED AUDIENCES.

C. THE VTR CATALOG SHOW IS FLEXIBLE AND WELL SUITED TO AFRICAN POSTS. THERE IS A CATALOG OF VTR'S AND THE POSTS CAN SELECT VTR'S MOST SUITABLE FOR THEIR COUNTRIES. LOCAL OR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S. FIRMS CAN BE USED TO CONDUCT SEMINARS ON THEMES SUITABLE TO THE COUNTRY. THEY MIGHT ALSO BE USED TO DISCUSS FILMS FOR TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.

D. SOME POSTS FELT THAT PROMPTER RESPONSE FROM COMMERCE ON INQUIRIES WOULD BE DESIRABLE.

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E. SOME POSTS SUGGESTED THAT A BUSINESS SCREENT4G APPLICATION FORM WAS A USEFUL WAY TO RECORD BUSINESS VISITS.

F. SOME POSTS ASK AMERICAN BUSINESS VISITORS TO RETURN TO POST FOR DEBRIEFING AFTER CALLS ON LOCAL

OFFICIALS OR BUSINESSMEN.

G. IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT COMMERCIAL OFFICERS COULD ACCOMPANY BUSINESS VISITORS ON THEIR CALLS IF IN THEIR DISCRETION IT WOULD SERVE TO ADVANCE U.S.COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

H. LOCAL NEWSPAPERS CAN BE PROFITABLY USED TO PUBLICIZE EXPORT PROMOTION SERVICES SUCH AS THE FOREIGN BUYERS PROGRAM.

I. A NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL OFFICERS THOUGHT THAT ONE OF THE BEST TRADE PROMOTION TECHNIQUES WOULD BE TO SEND AN INDUSTRY EXPERT WITH SEVERAL CATALOGS TO UNDERTAKE PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH GOVERNMENT PURCHASERS OR BUSINESSMEN IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

J. WHEN CATALOG SHOWS VISIT MORE THAN ONE POST, RESPONSIBILITY FOR PREPARATION OF THE WHOLE DIRECTORY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ONE POST.

K. SECTORAL SURVEYS OF AFRICAN MARKETS MIGHT BE CONSIDERED FROM A REGIONAL VIEWPOINT. AN EXAMPLE WOULD BE AN AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT SURVEY FOR FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA.

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6. IMPLEMENTATION

POSTS WILL BE INFORMED OF PROGRESS IN ACCOMPLISHING THE RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING WASHINGTON ACTION. MEANWHILE EACH COMMERCIAL OFFICER SHOULD INITIATE AT THE POST THE RECOMMENDATIONS CALLING FOR POST ACTION. PLEASE FORWARD A SUMMARY OF YOUR EXPERIENCE TO COMMERCE/ITA/ALP AND STATE/EB/OCA. THESE WILL BE SHARED WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES AT OTHER POSTS. VANCE

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Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Enclosure: n/a
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